

DCI Talking Points on Nicaraguan Elections

30 October 1984

Elections for Nicaragua's President, Vice President, and a 90-member assembly will take place as scheduled on 4 November, and despite the Sandinistas' expected victory, they will not gain the legitimacy they are seeking. Participating to date are:

- The ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front;
- Three small radical leftist parties--the Communist Party of Nicaragua, the Popular Action Movement/Marxist-Leninist, and the Nicaraguan Socialist Party, with a combined total of some 1,000 members.
- Two democratically-oriented parties--the Popular Social Christian Party and a minority faction of the Conservative Democratic Party, with a combined total of less than 400 members.

Boycotting the contest are:

- The National Democratic Coordinator--a coalition of four center-right parties, ~~two independent labor unions~~, and business groups--the Independent Liberal Party, and the majority faction of the Conservative Democrats; absent labor, a combined party membership of approximately 15,000.

We expect the regime will use whatever fraudulent procedures are necessary to obtain the desired results.

- It is doubtful that we will be able to document the cheating in ways that will provide persuasive evidence to the international community.

According to press reports, some 400 foreign observers will monitor the elections. Their verdicts, however, probably will depend more on their ideological predispositions than on the facts.

- The Netherlands is the only West European country thus far to send official observers, although several will be represented "unofficially" by their resident ambassadors.
- The Socialist International, European Christian Democratic Union, and European Parliament will send representatives.
- We believe all the Contadora countries and the Central American Core Four will decline to send observers--Mexico, Venezuela, and Costa Rica already have.

Recent Sandinista statements indicate concern about voter abstention. Nevertheless, we believe the regime's coercive tactics and general fear of retaliation--either overt or subtle--probably will induce an acceptable turnout.

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- The regime envisions gaining a majority of the votes cast and hopes at least 80 percent of the 1.6 million reportedly registered will go to the polls.

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- A scare campaign by the regime to the effect that the Sandinistas will be able to determine how people voted by fingerprinting them coupled with threats to deny ration coupons to those without validated voter identification cards will lead to fewer abstentions and opposition ballots.

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